

Covering the Seams: Unifying Effort to Defeat Transnational Terrorism

**A Monograph
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14. ABSTRACT In the post-Cold War decade of the 1990's the United States struggled to find a strategy suitable for the emerging security environment. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 clarified the perception of the heretofore obscure and confusing security environment. The attacks brought into focus the true picture of the threat to United States citizens and interests at home and abroad presented by transnational terrorism. In the ensuing months after the attacks, the Nation has undertaken actions across all aspects of national power to defeat the global threat of transnational terrorism. The Nation has formulated a strategy for combating terrorism that places the U.S. Military in a significant role. Perhaps the most significant role for the military in this effort will be globally operationalizing the application of military power to achieve the strategic objective to defeat transnational terrorism. The challenge for the United States' application of military power lies in leveraging a regionally based operational command and control structure against a globally distributed threat. This monograph proposes that the existing organization, delineated responsibilities, and commensurate procedures of the operational military system of the United States, must adapt to meet the necessities of the world environment and defeat the threat of transnational terrorism. To better understand the operational challenges confronted in the Global War on Terror, a commensurate level analysis of the adversaries is necessary. The operational analysis uses the doctrinal elements of operational design to guide the examination of the adversaries. Furthermore, the analysis uses the third element of operational design as a measure of effectiveness for the command and control structure of the operational military in addressing the global threat of transnational terrorism. The analysis in this monograph proposes an operational center of gravity for both transnational terrorism and the United States. The analysis then examines the strategic aims, end states, and critical factors of the competing systems. From this operational analysis, the critical requirement for sanctuary is identified as an operational vulnerability for transnational terrorism. A similar analysis is conducted for the United States and identifies a vulnerability in unity of effort created by the regional focus of the command and control framework for the operational military. Based on the analysis, this monograph recommends the designation or creation of a single command and control entity with a global responsibility for the operational military effort to combat terrorism. This entity can be either an operational staff or a combatant command. In either case, the operational responsibility for the military effort to combat terrorism should reside with a single entity with a functional responsibility to plan, coordinate, and direct the application of military power to combat terrorism. This arrangement would facilitate operations to defeat transnational terrorism by ensuring unity of effort and subsequent unified action on a global scale.			
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Abstract

COVERING THE SEAMS: UNIFYING EFFORT TO DEFEAT TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM by MAJOR Kimo C. Gallahue, United States Army, 54 pages.

In the post-Cold War decade of the 1990's the United States struggled to find a strategy suitable for the emerging security environment. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 clarified the perception of the heretofore obscure and confusing security environment. The attacks brought into focus the true picture of the threat to United States citizens and interests at home and abroad presented by transnational terrorism. In the ensuing months after the attacks, the Nation has undertaken actions across all aspects of national power to defeat the global threat of transnational terrorism.

The Nation has formulated a strategy for combating terrorism that places the U.S. Military in a significant role. Perhaps the most significant role for the military in this effort will be globally operationalizing the application of military power to achieve the strategic objective to defeat transnational terrorism. The challenge for the United States' application of military power lies in leveraging a regionally based operational command and control structure against a globally distributed threat. This monograph proposes that the existing organization, delineated responsibilities, and commensurate procedures of the operational military system of the United States, must adapt to meet the necessities of the world environment and defeat the threat of transnational terrorism.

To better understand the operational challenges confronted in the Global War on Terror, a commensurate level analysis of the adversaries is necessary. The operational analysis uses the doctrinal elements of operational design to guide the examination of the adversaries. Furthermore, the analysis uses the third element of operational design as a measure of effectiveness for the command and control structure of the operational military in addressing the global threat of transnational terrorism. The analysis in this monograph proposes an operational center of gravity for both transnational terrorism and the United States. The analysis then examines the strategic aims, end states, and critical factors of the competing systems. From this operational analysis, the critical requirement for sanctuary is identified as an operational vulnerability for transnational terrorism. A similar analysis is conducted for the United States and identifies a vulnerability in unity of effort created by the regional focus of the command and control framework for the operational military.

Based on the analysis, this monograph recommends the designation or creation of a single command and control entity with a global responsibility for the operational military effort to combat terrorism. This entity can be either an operational staff or a combatant command. In either case, the operational responsibility for the military effort to combat terrorism should reside with a single entity with a functional responsibility to plan, coordinate, and direct the application of military power to combat terrorism. This arrangement would facilitate operations to defeat transnational terrorism by ensuring unity of effort and subsequent unified action on a global scale.

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INTRODUCTION

Nineteen unremarkable men, motivated by a radical militant ideology; recruited from a culture on the edge of desperation in the face of perceived western cultural and physical encroachment; trained over a period of years in remote military camps and subsequently, undercover in the target country; and controlled by a distributed, decentralized organization driven by a vision of visible and horrific damage, set out to change the world. Time was on their side. They had the luxury of anonymity and could choose the moment of attack. Conventional acts of war were not on their menu of options. They lived among their target population; taking advantage of the freedoms and opportunities their avowed enemy afforded them. Then, on a crystal clear Tuesday morning in September, the Nation and the world watched in horror and disbelief as these nineteen terrorists, transformed four civilian airliners into weapons of mass destruction. The catastrophic damage unfolded in New York, Washington, D.C., and a rural field in western Pennsylvania. Simultaneously, the world's television screens broadcast these images in vivid color to a shocked population. These acts signaled to the western world that forces and people existed who did not share a vision of global cultural harmony that may have been the promise of a decade earlier. The world is a much more complicated place without the stabilizing tension of the opposing ideologies of totalitarian communism and capitalism.¹ If not realized before, the acts of September 11, 2001 offered an initial, undeniable glimpse of the true nature of the post-Cold War world.

In the ensuing months after the September 11th attacks on the United States, the Nation has struggled with the problem of countering and destroying terrorist groups that threaten United States citizens and interests at home and abroad. The U.S. Military, in great part due to its unique

¹Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 7.

capabilities produced by existing organization, structure, and worldwide presence, is designated the near-term lead for planning, coordinating, and executing operations to defeat terrorism.² At the heart of this global military capability is a framework for organization, responsibility, and function manifested at the operational level in the unified combatant commands. Various documents and directives from the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) define the responsibilities and force structure of these commands. The Unified Command Plan is the principal document that delineates this structure.³ This framework dictates responsibility in two ways -- function and geographic area. The unified commands serve as the initial operational level in the employment of military force in the pursuit of national objectives. In doctrinal terms, the operational level provides the link between strategy and tactics. The operational level and its employment, or operational art, is the method used to focus actions to achieve the strategic aims. Operationalizing strategy is, "about translating strategic purpose into tactical action."⁴ The application of military force will be translated into tactical action by the unified combatant commands. More specifically, in the existing structure, the unified commands with a regional responsibility bear the greater responsibility for operationalizing the strategy.

Formulated at the start of the Cold War, the U.S. Military's operational framework sets the conditions for military effort to protect the Nation's interests throughout the world. This organizational framework is not static. It has evolved as the environment in which it operates has

² Gordon Corera, "Special Operations Forces Take Care of the War on Terror," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (1 January 2002), 42.

³ William C. Story, *Military Changes to the Unified Command Plan: Background Issues for Congress, Report RL30245* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 21 June 1999), 2. [online] available from <http://bennelson.senate.gov/Crs/unifiedcommand.pdf>; internet; accessed 21 April 2003.

⁴ James K. Greer, "Operational Art for the Objective Force," *Military Review*, (September-October 2002), 24. [online] available from <http://www-cgsc.army.mil/milrev/english/SepOct02/greer.asp>; internet; accessed 10 October 2002.

changed.⁵ For almost fifty years, one threat had the greatest role in shaping the operational organization of the U.S. Military. That threat was, of course, containing and when required, defeating communism. In the early 1990's the threat posed by the monolithic adversary of communism disintegrated. Subsequently in the past decade, the Nation has struggled to find the appropriate military organization to address an emergent and vague operational setting⁶ In September of 2001, the change heralded by those four aircraft unmistakably and significantly crystallized the perception of the new operational environment.

Now, a decade after the threat that so significantly shaped the present operational framework has passed, the United States finds itself facing a much different menace than the social, economic, and ideological rival of communism. The terrorist threat is unlike any the U.S. has faced in recent history.⁷ Likewise, it has revealed itself a threat unlike any the current military organization is designed to address. That is, a threat comprised of non-state actors capable and willing to perpetrate massive violence upon innocents in pursuit of religiously motivated social and political objectives. Moreover, the terrorist threat is flexible and adaptive. Since the September 11th, attacks the nature of international terror has, and will likely continue to adjust as the United States and the world turn their full and focused attention to combating the threat. Bruce Hoffman identified this aspect of terrorism in his 1997 article for the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence. In it he notes, "Experience has nonetheless demonstrated repeatedly that, when confronted by new security measures, terrorists will seek to identify and

⁵ Ronald H. Cole and others, *History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946-1993* (Washington, D.C: Joint History Office, 1995), 1.

⁶ Charles S. Robb, "Examining Alternative UCP Structures," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, (Winter 1996-97), 85.

⁷ Donald Rumsfeld, "Secretary Rumsfeld Live Interview with MSNBC TV," interview by Lester Holt, 12 April, 2002. [online] available from http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2002/t04122002_t0412sdmsnbc.htm; internet; accessed 19 April 2003.

exploit new vulnerabilities, adjusting their means of attack accordingly and often carrying on despite the obstacles placed in their path.”⁸

This monograph draws the definition of terrorism from the nation’s guiding strategic document for the war against transnational terrorism. The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT), defines terror as the “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.”⁹ Additionally, the phenomenon of global or transnational terror needs clarification. Currently, the most infamous transnational terror organization is al Qaida. This organization is representative of the new breed of terrorism distinct from previous “ethno-nationalist and separatist organizations which dominated terrorism from the 1960s to the 1990s.”¹⁰ Religious motivation and a predilection for large-scale violence are the connecting threads common in this new generation of terrorism.¹¹ However, this monograph will not specifically address the threat in terms of al Qaida alone, but rather will examine the threat in terms of the numerous and interconnected Islamic ideological-based terror networks.¹²

The asymmetries that exist between current military doctrine and organization, and global terror networks are numerous and significant. One major asymmetry that stands out is the

⁸ Bruce Hoffman, “The Modern Terrorist Mindset: Tactics Targets, and Technologies,” (St. Andrews, Scotland: Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, 1997). [online] available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/pub/hob03.html>; internet; accessed 14 Feb 03. This view of the adaptive nature of terrorism is widely accepted. See Also CNN Presents. “Al Qaeda: The New Threat” aired 15 February 2003. Transcript [online]available from <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0302/15/cp.00.html>.

⁹ National Security Council, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, NSCT* (Washington D.C.: GPO, February 2003), 1. [online] available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/ctstrategy.pdf>; internet; accessed 22 February 2003.

¹⁰ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 200.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NSCT, 8.

geographically focused unified command structure versus a global threat. The global responsibilities for the operational military begin with the unified combatant commands. The responsibilities for these commands are dictated through a framework based primarily on geographic or regional lines.¹³ Although in recent months this framework has proven somewhat effective, the asymmetry remains.¹⁴ In light of the asymmetries, an examination of the adequacy of this geographical focus to meet and defeat this truly global threat, which knows no boundaries, is essential.

The requirement for a global operational military structure is not in question. The geographic qualities of the current framework have merit in a majority of current and potential regional issues confronting the Nation. In addition, the efforts of the United States Military under the current framework have recently dealt the elements of global terrorism some serious and far-reaching defeats.¹⁵ Nevertheless, as the terrorist system responds and adapts to this pressure, might not the opposing military system also adjust? This monograph contends that the answer to the preceding question is yes.

The analysis presented in this monograph will focus on the regional nature of the current operational framework and its effectiveness in combating a global adversary. The existing organization, delineated responsibilities, and commensurate procedures of the operational military system of the United States must adapt to meet the necessities of the world environment shaped by the attacks of September 11th, and defeat the unique threat of transnational terrorism. In order for the nation and the military to meet the challenges of the changed international

¹³ Story, 3.

¹⁴ “Secretary Rumsfeld Live Interview with MSNBC TV,” 12 April 2002. Examples of recent effectiveness are the loss of Afghanistan as a terrorist sanctuary and the continuing captures of high-level terrorist operatives.

landscape wrought by terrorism; to function effectively in executing the new military priorities in this landscape; and to defeat a globally distributed ideological adversary; an organization and structure with more capability and flexibility to ensure unified action is required. The significance of this assertion lies not in whether our existing structure is defeating terror as currently perceived, but whether our doctrine and organization can adjust to more effectively meet and defeat the long-term danger posed by global terror networks. In this protracted effort, our effectiveness will have enormous implications for the security of our citizens and our way of life now and, conceivably for years to come.

The elements of operational design as described in Joint Publication 5.00-1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* will serve as the measure to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization of the operational military in combating transnational terrorism. The operational level translates thought, i.e. strategic aims and national policy, into action. That action is the organization and employment of military forces in time and space. Joint doctrine describes this relationship in the definition of the operational level as:

The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events.¹⁵

The elements of operational design as defined by joint doctrine serve as the mechanism to scope this operational analysis. Operational design is the planning framework for formulating

¹⁵ Ambassador Francis X. Taylor, introduction to Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 2002), v. [online] available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2001/pdf/>; internet; accessed 11 March 2003.

¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary for Military and Associated Terms: Joint Publication (JP) 1-02* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 12 April 2001 as amended through 14 August 2002), 323.

campaigns or major operations.¹⁷ Joint Publication 5-00.1 lists the key aspects of operational design as “(1) understanding the strategic guidance (determining the desired end state and military objectives(s)); (2) identifying the critical factors (principal adversary strengths, including the strategic centers of gravity (CoGs), and weaknesses); and (3) developing an operational concept or scheme that will achieve the strategic objective(s).”¹⁸ Satisfying the first two elements of operational design, strategic guidance and critical factors will be the focus of the operational analysis of transnational terror and the United States. The third element, developing the operational concept, will function as the primary metric for evaluating the effectiveness of the current unified command structure in combating terrorism.

This monograph is organized in five major sections. The first and second chapters will use the first two elements of operational design to provide a basic understanding and analysis of both the threat and the U.S. Military in the context of the war on terror. The first chapter will describe the strategic setting for the global war on terror. This chapter will identify the strategic guidance, aims, and objectives of the adversaries. The second chapter will provide an operational analysis of both transnational terrorism and the United States Military. An operational CoG will be proposed for both combatants, and an analysis of their respective CoGs will be conducted using the framework developed by Dr. Joe Strange of the Marine Corps University. The chapter will provide a common picture of global terror and the operational U.S. Military in terms of characteristics, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. The intended outcome of the second chapter is a basic understanding of both the threat and the U.S. Military in the context of the war on terror.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning: Joint Publication (JP) 5-00.1* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 2002), GL-9.

¹⁸ Ibid., II-1.

The third chapter will examine the U.S. Military organization at the unified combatant command level. The focus here will be first on the purpose and history of the military's global structure as dictated by the Unified Command Plan and other guiding documents and directives. The focus will then shift to a description of the current responsibilities. This chapter will provide an understanding of the U.S. Military's operational framework and will illustrate its effectiveness in addressing the threat of a predominantly state-versus-state world order.

The fourth chapter will provide the further analysis of the United States Military's operational framework and responsibilities in the context of the global war on terrorism. This chapter will use the final element of operational design as a measure to evaluate the effectiveness of the U.S. Military's regional system in addressing the distinctive threat of transnational terrorism.

Finally, the fifth chapter will draw conclusions from the previous analysis of the unified command structure. From these conclusions, this chapter will offer recommended adjustments to the organization, responsibilities, and functions of the operational military to more effectively prosecute the global war to defeat terrorism.

CHAPTER 1:

STRATEGIC SETTING

As mentioned previously, the levels of war as defined by current joint doctrine do not exist separately. The three levels; strategic, operational, and tactical are related in a hierarchical framework.¹⁹ With an operational focus, this study will address the war on terror in accordance with the doctrinal definition. Because the operational level translates strategic aims and national policy into the employment of forces in time and space, an operational analysis must begin at the strategic level. What then are the strategic aspects of the war on terror? Again the first key element of operational design, defines these aspects as determining the strategic guidance, the endstate, and military objectives. This chapter will illustrate these particular aspects of transnational terror and the United States.

Strategic Aims: Transnational Terrorism

The strategic aim of radical Islam as embodied by transnational terrorism is not the total destruction of the United States and the rest of western civilization. That Islamic terror networks would not overly mourn this end is not in question. However, the true strategic aim is more as Brian Jenkins describes in his article, “The Organization Men”. As Jenkins describes them, these acts are designed to galvanize a Muslim population and bring about social and political reform in the Arab world.²⁰ Perhaps the best source to discern the strategic aim of the current threat of international terror comes from the fatwa issued by Usama bin Laden in 1996. While bin Laden

¹⁹ Department of Defense, *Doctrine for Joint Operations: Joint Publication (JP) 3-0* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 10 September 2001), II-2-3.

²⁰ Brian Jenkins, “The Organization Men,” in *How Did This Happen?* edited by James F. Hoge, JR., and Gideon Rose, (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 11.

does not speak for every terror organization, al Qaida is undoubtedly the most influential and active network on the world scene. Bin Laden's statement appears directed more towards an internal Muslim audience, and more specifically at the Arab Muslim population than any western target. In this edict entitled the "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," bin Laden states:

The latest and the greatest of these aggressions, incurred by the Muslims since the death of the Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) is the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places -the foundation of the house of Islam, the place of the revelation, the source of the message and the place of the noble Ka'ba, the Qiblah of all Muslims- by the armies of the American Crusaders and their allies.²¹

The fatwa supports the conclusion that the United States and its military presence in the Middle East are perceived as a symptom of the malaise bin Laden is targeting, not the root cause. This perception is further illustrated in another bin Laden fatwa issued in 1998. In it, bin Laden described the duty of every Muslim to kill Americans and their allies, "in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to trouble any Muslim."²²

Based on these edicts, the most likely strategic aim of twenty-first-century transnational terror, and the aim used in this analysis, is a social and political reformation of the Arab world. The removal of western armies from the Middle East has become the focal point of the Islamic brand of transnational terror. This western presence represents the power that bolsters the "host of corrupt satraps" ruling the Arab world.²³ Without this support these "quislings to Western

²¹ Usama bin Laden, "Declaration Of War Against The Americans Occupying The Land Of The Two Holy Places (Expel The Infidels From The Arab Peninsula, 23 August 1996)," In *Usama bin Laden's al Qaida: Profile of a Terrorist Network* by Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetnam, (New York: Transnational Publishers, September 2001), Appendix 1a.

²² Usama bin Laden, "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," (World Islamic Front Statement: 22 February, 1998); quoted in Paul K. Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins, *Deterrence and Influence in Counterterrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2002), 7.

²³ Brian Jenkins, *Countering al Qaeda: An Appreciation of the Situation and Suggestions for Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 4.

imperialism, would fall.”²⁴ An intermediate step, or operational objective, to arrive at the strategic end of Arab social and political reform is the expulsion of the United States presence and its accompanying influence in Middle East and Arab affairs.

Strategic Aims: The United States

The United States must undertake military action in defense of its citizens and interests at home and abroad. The strategic guidance that directs this military action satisfies the requirements expected in the first element of operational design. The guidance and description of the endstate and objectives appear in the latest version of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the supporting document the NSCT. In the NSS, the strategic aim of the United States is framed in a broad international context. That aim is “to help make the world not just safer but better.”²⁵ To achieve a safer and better world, the NSCT provides a strategic aim specifically related to the war on terrorism. That aim is to, “stop terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and our friends and allies around the world, and ultimately, to create an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and all those who support them.”²⁶

President Bush, in his September 2001 address to a Joint Session of Congress, addressed the desired endstate. In this address, he defined the endstate of the nascent war as follows, “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.”²⁷ Gauging this defeat will not come so

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵ National Security Council, *National Security Strategy, NSS* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, September 2002), 1.

²⁶ *NSCT*, 11.

²⁷ George W. Bush, “Address to Joint session of Congress” 20 September 2001,” [online] available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010920-8.html>; internet; accessed 14 Feb 03.

easily, however. At the strategic level, the defeat of an ideology is a long-term undertaking. Bruce Hoffman aptly describes the dilemma of achieving victory in combating an amorphous enemy like terrorism. In the book *Inside Terrorism*, Hoffman states:

...perhaps the most sobering realization that arises from addressing the phenomenon of terrorism is that the threat and the problems that fuel it can never be eradicated completely. Their complexity, diversity, and often idiosyncratic characteristics mean that there is no magic bullet, no single solution to be found and applied *pari passu*.²⁸

For the near-term, one of the few indicators of success may only result in a decrease or absence of large-scale coordinated terrorist activity. This indicator may prove to be the best measure of the United States' success in defeating transnational terror at the operational level.

In addressing military objectives, the NSS dictates action “to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. This will have a disabling effect upon the terrorist’s ability to plan and operate.”²⁹ The NSCT identifies this goal by describing a strategy of “direct and continuous action against terrorist groups, the cumulative effect of which will initially disrupt, over time degrade, and ultimately destroy the terrorist organizations.”³⁰ Therefore, rendering transnational terrorist organizations incapable of conducting coherent effective operations translates into the military objective, a component of the first element of operational design.

The strategic background offered in this chapter has provided both the necessary conclusions to enable further operational analysis and the required components of the first element of operational design. To summarize, based on this evidence the strategic aim of transnational terror

²⁸ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 211-212.

²⁹ NSS, 5.

³⁰ NSCT, 2.

is the fundamentalist reform of the Arab world starting with the removal of western influence. For the United States, the strategic aim is the defeat of all global terror networks. To further study this conflict, this monograph will next examine a potential center of gravity analysis for each belligerent. This analysis will focus on the operational level of the conflict rather than the strategic level.³¹ Based on having scoped the strategic aims to the operational level, the next step is to analyze the competing systems to identify critical factors, strengths, and weaknesses.

³¹ Lt Col James A. Reilly, “A Strategic Center of Gravity Analysis on the Global War on Terrorism,” (Monograph, U.S. Army War College 2002). This monograph provides a strategic analysis of transnational terrorism and the United States. Lt Col Reilly proposes and supports the strategic CoG of transnational terror as radical fundamentalist Islamic ideology. He identifies the U.S. strategic CoG as the will of the international coalition.

CHAPTER 2:

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Center of Gravity Discussion

Current military doctrine suggests the use of the concept of center of gravity (CoG) to determine both friendly and enemy strengths and weaknesses. Joint publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, states that the concept of a CoG is a useful analytical tool for determining strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. In planning, this analysis informs the design of campaigns and operations that seek to attack an enemy CoG and defend the friendly CoG.³² How then do we arrive at this CoG? By what procedure is it determined? For clarity, this requires a definitional examination.

The CoG and its determination lie in the art, rather than the science realm of warfare. The CoG concept has multiple definitions. Even within our own doctrine, the accepted definition has changed over the last decade. The originator of the concept, Carl von Clausewitz, defines a center of gravity as, “the hub of all power and movement on which everything depends.”³³ Current doctrine defines a center of gravity as “Those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight.”³⁴ Lately, LTC Antulio Echevarria has proposed an alternate definition based on his further analysis of Clausewitz’s writings. Echevarria defines a CoG as, “focal points that serve to hold a combatant’s entire system or structure together and that draw power from a variety of sources and

³² Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Joint Staff, 10 September 2001), III-22.

³³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 720.

³⁴ *JP1-02*, 67.

provide it with purpose and direction.”³⁵ He asserts that this view is more akin to what Clausewitz had in mind in the 19th Century, and that it still applies today.

Current doctrine, according to Echevarria, has taken a decidedly capabilities or force orientation to the application of the CoG concept. This, he says, is misleading and counter-productive, especially as the newer operational planning concepts are adopting an effects-based method. The mechanical view more readily supports an effects approach in that it identifies the CoG as a focal point that, if successfully attacked, will “unbalance” the enemy system.³⁶ This is a superior definition in that it readily allows a view of both transnational terrorism and the U.S. Military as complex adaptive systems.³⁷ It also readily facilitates a determination of the ends in terms of effects rather than the destruction of forces or capabilities. Therefore, the definition of the center of gravity for this analysis is derived from LTC Echeverria’s 2002 monograph.

Finally, a caveat: any determination of a center of gravity, especially an adversary’s, must be viewed as a proposition rather than an established fact. Again, Clausewitz’s nineteenth Century interpretation of war is appropriate for the modern age. Clausewitz points out that war is fraught with uncertainty.³⁸ The advent and application of modern technology has not eliminated the friction and fog prevalent in the realm of conflict. Even with the deluge of information available in this information age, there is still no mechanism for truly revealing the purposes or predicting the actions of one’s adversary.

The application of complexity and systems theory further illustrates this fog. A political entity, traditional state or an unconventional non-state actor, can be observed as an adaptive

³⁵ Echevarria, 19.

³⁶ Ibid., 13.

³⁷ Thomas Czerwinski, *Coping With the Bounds, Speculations on Non-Linearity in Military Affairs* (Washington, DC: National Defense University: 1998), Chapter 1. [online] available from <http://www.dodccrp.org/copind.htm>; internet; accessed 8 January 2003.

³⁸ Clausewitz, 95.

system that responds to internal and exogenous stimuli. More precisely, it is an open system comprised of and supported by an aggregation of a multitude of smaller but no less open systems.³⁹ In this framework one thing is certain, uncertainty. However, this way of thinking should not drive the observer to admit defeat in the face of overwhelming uncertainty. Rather, by recognizing the uncertainty and applying a holistic interdependent approach to political intercourse, one may arrive at a more correct assessment of a problem and thus, a better solution. Again, the determination of a CoG is at best, an estimation or a proposition, arrived at through analysis. Furthermore, it is recognized that in response to stimulus the adversary system may shift or change the CoG. Echevarria uses an example of an infantryman standing upright to explain his concept of a CoG as a point of balance for a system.⁴⁰ To extend this metaphor, if you push the soldier with calculated force at a calculated point to unbalance him while he is standing upright, he may just bend his knees and kick you in the groin.

Operational Analysis of Transnational Terrorism

The leadership is the most supportable proposition for the operational center of gravity for transnational terror. More specifically, the CoG is the decision-making level of leadership, which coordinates, funds, and approves worldwide terrorist activity. For the purposes of this analysis the term ‘leadership’ will refer to this decision-making level. The 2003 NSCT provides support for this proposition. The strategy provides a general description of a terrorist structure and states, “...at the top of the structure, the terrorist leadership provides the overall direction and strategy.”⁴¹ The strategy further describes the leadership as that which, “breathes life into a terror campaign” and “becomes the catalyst for terrorist action. The loss of the leadership can cause

³⁹ Czerwinski, Chapter 1.

⁴⁰ Echevarria, 8.

⁴¹ NSCT, 6.

many organizations to collapse.”⁴² The manner in which the NSCT describes the leadership of transnational terrorism closely matches Echevarria’s definition of a CoG. If the leadership is destroyed or disrupted, the effect translates throughout the entire organization because the leaders provide the entire system with focus and direction. Leadership is the focal point that effectively knits together the loosely organized but interconnected terror network, and furthermore, leadership provides the system with purpose and direction.

Additionally, history can inform the proposition of the leadership as a CoG. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. The United States and other nations have dealt with and defeated terror organizations throughout history. Leadership has often been the key to defeating these organizations. Central to the defeat of past terrorist organizations has been action that destroyed or captured key leaders of these movements. Brian Jenkins points to the example of the Shining Path and Turkey’s PKK that “faded with the death or capture of charismatic and effective leaders.”⁴³ Additionally, Bruce Hoffman points out that the French terrorist group Direct Action “had effectively been decapitated by the capture of virtually its entire leadership.”⁴⁴ Leadership then is a suitable proposition as a CoG. Past successful methods that attacked leadership to defeat terrorism can enlighten this current effort.

Leadership derives its power from numerous subordinate systems. These subordinate systems are the critical capabilities of the leadership. Figure 1, drawn from the 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, illustrates a generic structure of transnational terrorist capabilities.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Jenkins, *Countering al Qaeda*, 9.

⁴⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 170.



Figure 1

This study will use Dr. Joe Strange's framework for center of gravity analysis as the mechanism to further examine the terrorist system. Developed in 1996 as a monograph from the Marine Corps University, his proposed method has recently been introduced into Joint doctrine for campaign planning. It fills a hole in the doctrine by providing military planners a method for identifying those things that support a CoG. He proposes that a CoG can be evaluated using three component parts: critical capabilities, critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities. Dr. Strange defines them as follows:

Critical Capabilities: Primary abilities which merit a Center of Gravity to be identified as such in the context of a given scenario, situation or mission

Critical Requirements: Essential conditions, resources, and means for a critical capability to be fully operative.

Critical Vulnerabilities: Critical requirements or components thereof which are deficient or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction, or attack (moral/physical harm) in a manner achieving decisive results – the smaller the resources and effort applied and the smaller the risk and cost the better.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ NSCT, 6.

⁴⁶ Dr Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity & Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Foundation, 1996), 3.

This method begins by distilling a CoG into its critical capabilities. The next step is a further analysis of the critical capabilities. The analysis of the capabilities will result in an identification of each capability's critical requirements. Finally, to identify critical vulnerabilities, a study of the critical capabilities and requirements will ascertain those that are susceptible to attack. This method should then indicate a path or a line of operation that focuses military action to attack the proposed center of gravity.⁴⁷ Without a method to focus analysis beyond the identification of the CoG, the ensuing plan could evolve into a haphazard progression of ineffective and de-linked engagements.

In the case of terrorism for example, leadership is the proposed operational CoG. Doctrine suggests that “destruction or neutralization of adversary CoGs is the most direct path to victory.”⁴⁸ With only individual leaders as targets, indiscriminate efforts to pursue, capture, or destroy these could easily deteriorate into a global equivalent of the carnival game Whack-a-Mole. As targets are identified each is attacked based on opportunity not priority or method. This unfocused approach would obviously detract from any effective application of resources. The application of Dr. Strange’s concept provides focus to operations to effectively identify and attack the adversary’s vulnerabilities. Likewise, this concept can identify vulnerabilities of a friendly system to focus operations to protect a CoG.

⁴⁷ JP 5-00.1, II-9.

⁴⁸ JP 3-0, III-22.

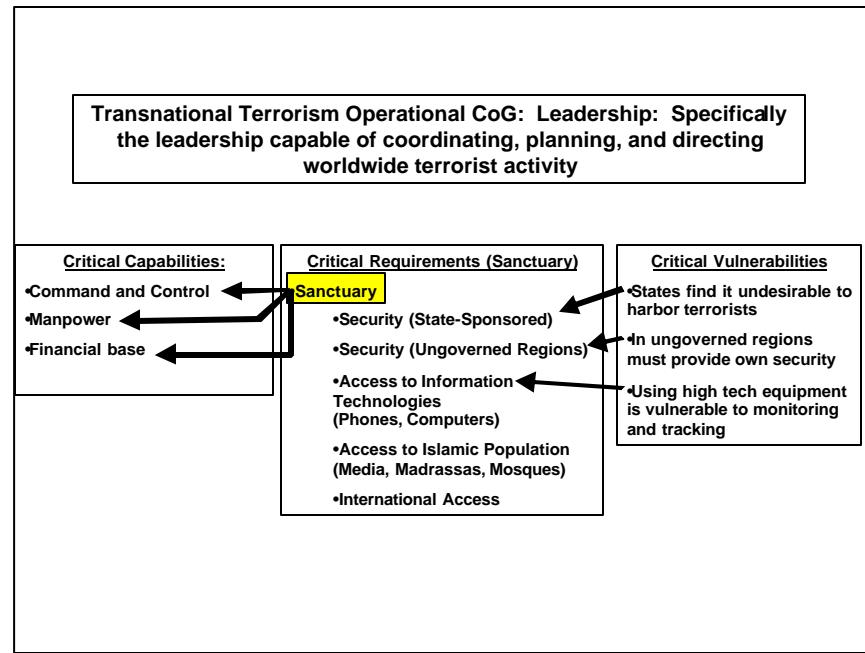


Figure 2

The graphical representation in Figure 2 depicts this analytical method as applied to global terrorism. This method begins with the operational CoG, the leadership. In accordance with the method, the next step is to identify the critical capabilities that support this proposed CoG. By definition, these capabilities should provide merit and support to the idea that leadership is a source of purpose, direction, and focus of the terrorist system. Using the NSCT as a source, the characteristics of transnational terrorism can be interpreted as critical capabilities.⁴⁹

These critical capabilities are first a command and control structure that allows the leadership to plan, direct, and coordinate operations. This capability has manifested itself as a worldwide spread of operatives in loosely organized cells that take direction from the decision-making

⁴⁹ NSCT, 11.

authority.⁵⁰ This capability provides responsive connectivity between the core of decision makers and the distributed operators. The second capability is a trained manpower base that in the loose hierarchy of transnational terrorism nominates and, with approval and funding executes terrorist activity.⁵¹ Finally, a financial base provides a capability that supports and funds day-to-day operations and specific violent actions. The financial base draws money from various legal and illegal sources. Terror organizations like al Qaida raise money from diverse activities ranging from the collection of private donations to operations in the drug trade.⁵² Similar to the assistance provided to the command and control structure, technology aids the terrorists in raising and managing financial assets.⁵³ In the ways described, the critical capabilities support the proposition of the leadership as a CoG.

Following Dr. Strange's model, the capabilities are then analyzed to determine necessary aspects to make a critical capability fully functional. The model identifies these aspects as critical requirements. Figure 2 portrays the supporting relationship of one critical requirement, sanctuary, to the three critical capabilities. As a preface to the analysis, sanctuary is defined as "a place that provides refuge, asylum, or immunity from arrest."⁵⁴ One aspect of sanctuary is purely physical. A secure geographic location provides for a degree of freedom of action for operations. Additionally, terrorists may find and take advantage of the sanctuary offered by the freedoms of open societies.⁵⁵ As depicted in Figure 2 however, sanctuary that enables operational capability

⁵⁰ Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetnam, *Usama bin Laden's al Qaida: Profile of a Terrorist Network* (New York: Transnational Publishers, September 2001), 3.

⁵¹ Jenkins, Countering al Qaeda, 5.

⁵² NSCT, 7.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *The American Heritage Dictionary: Second College Edition* (Boston MA, Houghton Mifflin, 1985), s.v. "sanctuary."

⁵⁵ NSCT, 7-8.

offers much more. Beyond security, sanctuary must offer access to population and technologies.⁵⁶ With this access a secure location becomes much more; it becomes a base of operations. In either case, sanctuary is a necessary requirement of all three of the previously identified critical capabilities.

For both the command and control structure and the trained manpower base, sanctuary is a requirement that enables effective operations.⁵⁷ The security provided by sanctuary allows for freedom of movement and facilitates command and control. Guaranteed security makes uninterrupted long-term planning and coordination possible. Sanctuary enables terrorist organizations by providing the leadership and the operatives a secure environment in which to plan and coordinate operations. Regarding financial capability, sanctuary provides the terrorist leadership with access to the tools to raise, transfer, and spend cash. Financial methods range from conventional international banking systems to the Islamic *Hawala* system of lending and managing money.⁵⁸

Here is a clear demonstration of the value of Dr. Strange's model as an operational tool for identifying high value targets.⁵⁹ Sanctuary is a requirement of the three critical capabilities supporting the operational CoG of leadership. If sanctuary is vulnerable, or through reasonable effort can be rendered vulnerable, then operational action to attack this requirement should weaken the CoG. Because this sanctuary supports three distinct capabilities, a greater effect on the CoG can be expected.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 6-9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁹ James K. Greer, "Decisive Operations Elective," (School for Advanced Military Studies, January 2003).

So far, the analysis has identified sanctuary as a requirement that makes the three capabilities fully functional. The next step to apply the operational model is an analysis of the second element of operational design, determining adversary weaknesses. How is the CoG vulnerable? Can it be attacked due to an inherent deficiency or can reasonable effort weaken either the requirements or capabilities? The model now seeks to answer these questions by identifying vulnerabilities in either the capabilities or requirements that, by extension, will attack the CoG. Further examination of sanctuary as a critical requirement suggests numerous vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

Figure 2 illustrates a number of required conditions to enable sanctuary to serve as a viable base of operations. The NSCT noted two ways by which terrorist organizations gain security. These two methods have inherent vulnerabilities. First, security can be granted by a traditional nation-state. The vulnerability in this form of security resides in the fact that few nation-states are willing to publicly align themselves with any organization that finds acceptable the murder of thousands of innocents. The 2002 State Department Publication *Patterns of Global Terrorists* lists the overwhelming, and in some cases surprising, expressions of support from nations and political organizations that condemned the attacks of September 11th.⁶⁰ Even Libya, one of the first nations to extend condolences after the attacks, is a cooperating partner in the war on terrorism.⁶¹ Moreover, even the few nations that sympathize with radical terror's cause are unlikely to be willing to face militarily the might of the United States and essentially the rest of the world. The United States' response, across the elements of national power after the September 11th attacks is "disrupting and possibly dissuading some (nations) who would otherwise be hosts."⁶² The effect

⁶⁰ *Patterns of Global Terror*, 51.

⁶¹ William H Lewis, "The War on Terrorism: The Libya Case," *The Atlantic Council of the United States Bulletin*, Vol.XII, No.3, (Washington, D.C.: April 2002), 2.

⁶² Davis and Jenkins, 20.

generated by the concerted efforts of the elements of national power has lessened the availability of state-sponsored sanctuary. If the leadership of transnational terror relies on the security provided by state-sponsorship, then actions to reduce sponsorship will adversely affect terrorist operations.

Second, in failed or failing states, terrorist organizations take advantage of ungoverned areas where state authority and control is weak and terrorist organizations are able to secure themselves.⁶³ In ungoverned regions, terror organizations secure their operations mostly by the remoteness of the location. It stands to reason that this type of sanctuary proves most useful when there is no great need to hide. The security granted by remoteness of location provides no guarantee for protection though, especially since the attacks of September 11th have focused the attention of the United States, a modern power with global reach. Additionally, the remoteness of a location will cause problems for the critical capabilities requiring access. This characteristic makes a remote location marginally useful because remoteness can preclude access. Information technologies like satellite communications and email can significantly mitigate the communication challenges of a remote location, but the use of these technologies generates more vulnerabilities. The NSCT recognized these vulnerabilities by focusing on the technological capabilities of terrorist organizations in the goals and objectives section of the strategy.⁶⁴ If a modern power has focused considerable effort to thwarting terrorist operations, then those technological enablers may become homing beacons for forces and armaments.

So far, the analysis in this monograph has identified the strategic aims and objectives of transnational terror as required by the first key element of operational design. The second element calls for the determination of adversary critical factors, strengths, and weaknesses. The

⁶³ NSCT, 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

operational model of Dr. Strange provided the vehicle for this determination. In summary, this analysis of capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities, has demonstrated a weakness in the terrorist system. That weakness is a requirement for sanctuary. First, existing nation-states are lately finding that overt sponsorship of terrorism has consequences. Those states harboring terrorists may soon find their hold on power endangered much like the Taliban in Afghanistan. Second, ungoverned regions offer real security only if their location is unknown and remote. Finally, the requirement for global access is dependent upon technology to operate at an effective level from a remote location. The technological trail, more often than desired, can lead to detection and then destruction.

This analysis suggests the development of a concept or scheme to attack the terrorist CoG of leadership through its vulnerable requirement of sanctuary. The development of a concept is the third key element of operational design. As demonstrated recently during operations in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Philippines, sanctuary is vulnerable to the application of military force.⁶⁵ The first two examples are direct applications of the Nation's military power in action against terror. The operations in the Philippines demonstrate a different approach to combating terrorism. The *NSCT* described this method as assisting "states who are willing to combat terrorism, but may not have the means."⁶⁶ As this variance indicates, in this protracted campaign defeating transnational terrorism will likely involve operations that range across the full spectrum of war. A flexible, coordinated, and global concept is necessary to produce success.

⁶⁵ "Secretary Rumsfeld Live Interview with MSNBC TV," 12 April 2002.

⁶⁶ *NSCT*, 17.

Operational Analysis of the U.S. Military and Combating Terrorism

The war to defeat transnational terrorism will involve a concerted and coordinated effort of all available means to achieve the national objective.⁶⁷ The U.S. Military has a role in the war against global terrorism; but other elements of national power and their associated agencies will have significant if not decisive contributions in defeating terrorism as this campaign develops.⁶⁸ As doctrine states, “Military campaigns are not conducted in isolation of other government efforts to achieve national strategic objectives. Military power is used in conjunction with other instruments of national power.”⁶⁹ Since the military is not the sole actor on behalf of the Nation, the United States may have numerous CoGs in this campaign. However, this analysis is only concerned with combating terror from the standpoint of military efforts of the U.S to defeat transnational terrorism. Therefore, in tying the analysis back to the elements of operational design, a CoG must be determined. A proposed operational CoG for the United States in this war is the command and control structure of the operational military. More specifically, the operational CoG is the global arrangement of organization, responsibility, and function provided by the system of the unified combatant commands, arrayed to achieve the strategic objective to defeat transnational terrorism.

This monograph will now provide an operational analysis of the U.S. operational CoG comparable to the analysis conducted for transnational terrorism. What justifies the assertion above that the command and control structure of the operational military is a CoG in this campaign? First, identification of the combatant commands as the initial operational level is necessary in supporting this proposition. Doctrine provides the evidence supporting this

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁹ JP 5-00.1, vii.

assertion. *Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, describes the relationship of the unified combatant commanders to the strategic level. The *UNAAF* states, “The commanders of combatant commands exercise COCOM of assigned forces and are directly responsible to the NCA for the performance of assigned missions and the preparedness of their commands.”⁷⁰ The National Command Authorities (NCA) is a term that represents the President and the Secretary of Defense.⁷¹ The NCA is the embodiment of the strategic level. In exercising the military aspect of national power, the NCA provides the strategic direction with the combatant commands operationalizing the strategy to achieve the strategic objectives.⁷² In the context of the global war on terror, their missions and tasks will relate to the strategic aim of defeating transnational terror. From this relationship, it is evident that the unified combatant commands are representative of the operational level.

The definition of COCOM, Combatant Command authority, provides additional support for the operational military as the CoG. COCOM is a term describing the level of control exercised over forces assigned to combatant commands. Doctrine defines COCOM as,

the authority of a combatant commander to perform those functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command.⁷³

The definition reinforces the proposition of the command and control structure as a CoG by describing the functions of the combatant commanders as related to the organization and employment of forces to accomplish assigned missions. The operational command and control of

⁷⁰ Department of Defense, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF): Joint Publication (JP) 0-2* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 10 July 2001), I-8.

⁷¹ *JP 1-02*, 297.

⁷² *JP 0-2*, I-4-5.

⁷³ *JP 1-02*, 80.

the military is embodied in the unified combatant commands. These commands, through COCOM authority, translate strategic direction into tangible tactical action to achieve strategic objectives. In translating the strategic direction, the commands provide purpose and direction to their assigned forces.

The arrangement described fits neatly into Echevarria's definition of a CoG. Again, Echevarria defines a CoG as, "focal points that serve to hold a combatant's entire system or structure together and that draw power from a variety of sources and provide it with purpose and direction."⁷⁴ In the context of a global effort to defeat terror, the U.S. exercises the military aspect of national power through this structure of command and control. It is the focal point and provides purpose and direction to the Nation's military effort. Effective command and control at the operational level allows the United States to leverage vastly asymmetric power in the elements of quantity, quality, technological superiority, and national wealth in a way that no terrorist organization can hope to match.

⁷⁴ Echevarria, 19.

Returning to the elements of operational design and Dr. Strange's model, the next step in applying operational design is an examination of the command and control structure of the operational military. Figure 3 depicts a critical capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities analysis of the proposed CoG of the operational military's command and control structure.

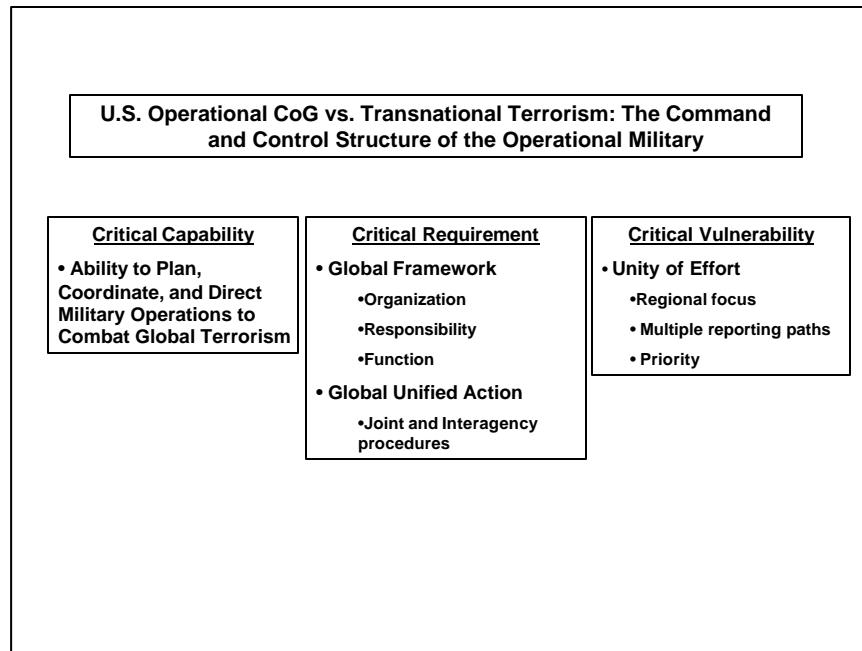


Figure 3

The following analysis will focus on the critical capability of the United States to plan, coordinate, and direct military operations to combat terrorism. The *NSCT* notes the need for this capability in directing that “America will focus decisive military power and specialized intelligence resources to defeat terrorist networks globally.”⁷⁵ Figure 3 identifies two critical requirements for focusing decisive military power on a global scale.

⁷⁵ *NSCT*, 17.

First, joint doctrine dictates the critical requirement for unified action to ensure the most effective application of resources in achieving strategic objectives. Doctrine defines unified action as:

the broad scope of activities (including the synchronization and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental agencies) taking place within unified commands...Unified action synchronizes and/or integrates joint, single-Service, special, multinational, and supporting operations with the operations of government agencies, NGOs, and IOs to achieve unity of effort in the operational area.⁷⁶

Additionally, doctrine describes unified action as an operational link to the strategic level. *JP 0-2* states, “Unified action within the military instrument of national power supports the national strategic unity of effort through close coordination with the other instruments of national power as they apply within the theater environment and its unity of effort.”⁷⁷ Unified action results from the integration and synchronization of service and agency abilities. Joint and interagency procedures are explicit in the doctrinal definition of unified action. These procedures provide the operational command and control structure with the ability to plan, coordinate, and direct effective actions to achieve national objectives. In the context of the effort to defeat transnational terrorism then, the critical requirement to establish unified action on a global scale is essential.

However, the doctrinal definition of unified action applies only to activities within unified commands. As the NSCT notes, action to defeat transnational terrorism must take place globally. As currently defined, there is no doctrinal provision for unified action on a worldwide scale between combatant commands. As described in the quote above from *JP 0-2*, strategic unity of effort is supported by unified action within a theater environment. In the effort to defeat terrorism, though, strategic unity of effort must be supported by global unified action resulting from operational unity of effort on a global scale.

⁷⁶ *JP 0-2*, viii.

A global framework of organization, responsibility, and function is the second requirement that supports the critical capability to plan, coordinate, and direct military operations to combat global terrorism. This global framework for operational command and control exists in the system of unified combatant commands.⁷⁸ The next chapter explores in detail the history, purpose, and structure of the unified combatant command system. For now, it suffices that a framework to command and control the operational military on a global scale exists in this system.

As in the analysis of the transnational terrorist system, the second element of operational design calls for a similar analysis of the United States' operational CoG to determine any weaknesses or deficiencies vulnerable to exploitation. This analysis proposes that the United States has a critical vulnerability defined most simply as unity of effort. Figure 3 illustrates the vulnerability of unity of effort. This vulnerability facilitates transnational terrorists operations against a powerful adversary like the United States. This vulnerability in the operational command and control structure is the thesis of this monograph and Chapter 4 will examine in-depth, the structure versus transnational terrorism.

This chapter provided an analysis of the adversaries in the Global War on Terror and proposed the leadership as an operational CoG for transnational terror. For the U.S., this study proposed the operational military's command and control structure as the CoG. These CoGs were then examined in terms of the framework developed by Dr. Joe Strange. In this examination, the critical vulnerability for transnational terror is the requirement of sanctuary. This requirement generates several vulnerabilities that expose the terrorist CoG. The inherent

⁷⁷ Ibid., I-5.

⁷⁸ Cole, 28. The Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 codified the structure of this framework by establishing a clear chain of command from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders.

vulnerabilities in the requirement for sanctuary are a reliance on third parties or the terrorist's own relatively meager forces for security, and a requirement to access information technologies in order to coordinate action on a global scale. For the U.S., unity of effort is identified as a major self-inflicted vulnerability in the critical requirements of a global framework and unified action. This vulnerability hinders the Nation's ability to plan, coordinate, and direct action to combat terrorism on a global scale. To better understand this vulnerability and its effect on the operational CoG, the next chapter will take a closer look at the command and control structure of the operational military.

CHAPTER 3:

THE MILITARY'S GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR OPERATIONS

The United States Military is unique in the world. No other nation has the ability to project such sustainable power across the globe. The Nation garners this ability through two methods. The first is the ability to rapidly move appropriate force to designated areas. The second method consists of a global structure that dictates the stationing and maintaining of forces abroad. These forces are organized regionally into the five combatant commands. One of the primary purposes of the global organization of military power is to ensure unified action. Doctrine states, “combatant commanders are in pivotal positions to ensure that unified actions are planned and conducted” in accordance with strategic guidance.⁷⁹

For the effective application of the military aspect of national power, the quality of unity of effort is desirable during times of war and peace. Unity of effort, while not itself a principle of war, is an extension of the principle of Unity of Command. Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations*, defines unity of effort as, “the coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure.”⁸⁰ The U.S. Military’s joint doctrine prescribes through the system of combatant commands, coherent unified action. As described in the previous chapter, unified action is the integrated and synchronized application of joint, multi-national, and interagency activities within a combatant command that achieves unity of effort. The Unified Command Plan (UCP) delineates missions,

⁷⁹ JP 0-2, I-5.

⁸⁰ JP 3-0, A-2

functional and geographic responsibilities, and outlines the command structure to perform these responsibilities through unified action.⁸¹

History

The historical path that led to this distinctive arrangement is long and varied. It has its beginning in World War II as the Allied powers, primarily the United States and Great Britain, created a system of combined commands to orchestrate action against the Axis powers in the European Theater. The problem of integrating forces and orchestrating effective action was solved by adopting a system of unified command over U.S. forces and was “...a natural concomitant of combined (US – British) command set up during that conflict by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”⁸² The aforementioned problem of integrating force and orchestrating action remains relevant today in the joint, operational employment of U.S. Forces worldwide.

As stated in the introduction, a global framework for U.S. Military organization, responsibility, and function has evolved. It is dictated through various documents and directives from the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the CJCS.⁸³ Foremost among these documents is the classified UCP. This plan provides the overarching guidance from the President for the operational control of the military. The UCP establishes combatant command missions, responsibilities, and force structure. Doctrine provides a more complete description of the UCP in *Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces*:

The UCP is a document approved by the President that sets forth basic guidance to all unified combatant commanders; establishes their missions, responsibilities, and force structure; delineates the general geographic area of responsibility

⁸¹ *JP 0-2*, I-3.

⁸² Cole, 11.

⁸³ *JP 5-00.1*, III-5.

(AOR) for geographic combatant commanders; and specifies functional responsibilities for functional combatant commanders.⁸⁴

As stated before, this system arose from the command relationships developed in WWII and has evolved significantly to the present. The primary driving force behind the evolution has been and remains the necessity to coherently organize and control military force as an element of United States national power in an ever-changing world. The global focus, thrust upon the United States Military at the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, also served to heighten the need for a comprehensive and responsive organizational system.⁸⁵

The UCP is necessarily flexible. In its fifty-seven year history it has undergone numerous and far-reaching review and adjustment since its original inception as the “Outline Command Plan” of 1946.⁸⁶ Since its formulation, the dictated structure and responsibilities adapted as the operational environment changed. Of course, the Cold War and the strategies devised for countering the spread of communism were significant factors that shaped the organization of the command and control framework.⁸⁷ The current UCP of 2002 is the latest of over twenty revisions that have occurred since the plan’s inception. The attacks of 11 September, as expected, greatly influenced this version.⁸⁸ The 2002 UCP pays increased attention to the changed global

⁸⁴ *JP 0-2, I-3.*

⁸⁵ David Armstrong, foreword to *The History of the Unified Command Plan: 1946-1993* by Ronald H. Cole and others (Washington, D.C: Joint History Office, 1995).

⁸⁶ Cole, 131.

⁸⁷ In *The History of the Unified Command Plan: 1946-1993* (7, 33-34, 95, and 116), the authors consistently indicate the effect of the Cold War security environment in the evolutionary changes of the command and control structure of the military. Likewise, as the *History* covers the more recent changes, the effect of the end of the Cold War on this structure is apparent.

⁸⁸ Peter Gillette, “The 2002 Unified Command Plan: Changes and Implications,” *National Security Watch 03-2* (Arlington, VA: 21 February 2003), 1. [online] available from <http://www.usa.org/PDFdocs/nsw03-2.pdf>; internet; accessed 14 April 2003.

security environment and incorporates measures to improve the military's response to the war on terrorism.

The Purpose

This global military framework of organization, responsibility, and function dictates the span of control for the five regional combatant commands to specialize and concentrate the efforts of their commands to meet the unique requirements of national policy in their areas.⁸⁹ Simply stated, the desired effect of the geographic arrangement of responsibility is unified action. Within the specified regions, the UCP "decentralizes operations" and gives the combatant commanders freedom of action to deal with regional issues, both in peacetime and war that arise in their respective AORs.⁹⁰ The plan provides this flexibility by providing joint forces to the command and by listing forces to expand the command's capability when needed.

With this built-in flexibility, the Nation's leadership has the ability to change relationships and responsibilities as circumstances warrant. In 1979, a change to Department of Defense procedure mandated a formal review every two years to ensure the UCP adequately addressed the security environment.⁹¹ Furthermore, the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, popularly known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, took further steps to ensure the system of combatant commands remained an effective, relevant, and responsive tool for the global application of military power by making the biennial review part of U. S. Law.⁹² The military was acutely aware that the post-Cold War environment demanded commensurate change in the Nation's military structure. An in-depth review in the early 1990's built upon the move to

⁸⁹ Story, 4.

⁹⁰ *JP 3-0*, II-12.

⁹¹ Cole, 63.

⁹² Story, 8.

jointness dictated by Goldwater-Nichols. These recent changes strengthened the role of the combatant commanders as the primary actors in the operational employment of military force.⁹³ Still, a regional focus remains a central method for the organization of these responsibilities.

The Structure

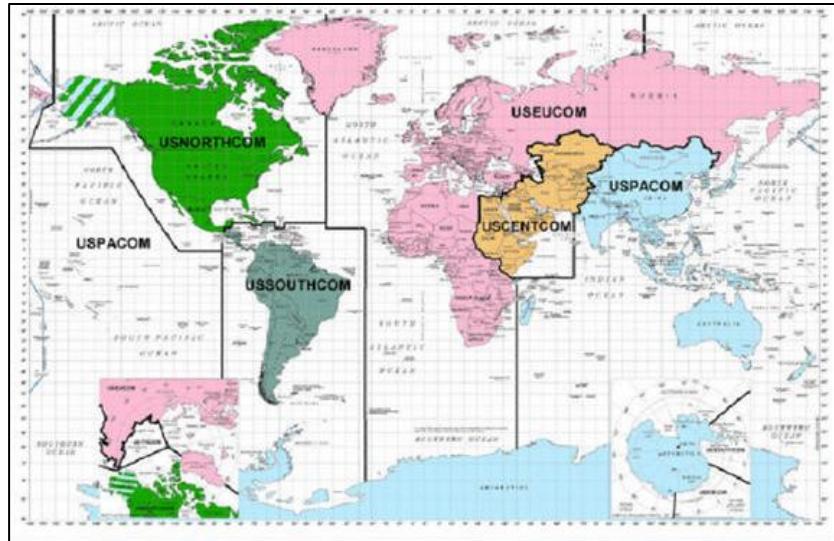


Figure 4

The current UCP dictates nine unified commands. Five of these, USEUCOM, USPACOM, USCENTCOM, USSOUTHCOM, and the newly created USNORTHCOM are regional commands with their directed focus on specific geographic areas (See Figure 4)⁹⁴. Three more commands, USSTRATCOM, USTRANSCOM, and USJFCOM, are functional commands with

⁹³ Cole, 95-116. The period from 1983 to 1993 saw an increase in the powers of the combatant commanders and the CJCS. Increasing joint capability was the goal in implementing these changes.

⁹⁴ Department of Defense, *Unified Command Plan* (April 2002), [online] available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/unifiedcommand>; internet; accessed 11 March, 2003.

responsibilities described mainly in terms of supporting roles in particular competencies to facilitate military action.⁹⁵

The ninth command, USSOCOM, has both a supported and supporting role that has been clarified recently by the newest UCP. USSOCOM has all the responsibilities of a functional command regarding the training and provision for special operations forces, but in specific instances, it is a supported combatant command.⁹⁶ According to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, these specific instances will involve planning and executing missions in support of the effort to combat terrorism.⁹⁷ Additionally, because of the nature of USSOCOM's designated missions and requirements, it also takes on some of the Title X responsibilities usually assigned only to service components.⁹⁸

A significant aspect of the UCP is the geographic nature of the delineation of warfighting responsibilities as illustrated in Figure 4. Five of the combatant commands have specified geographic regions assigned to them. Within these regions they are responsible for the operational employment (prioritizing, organizing, and engaging their assigned forces) in order to accomplish the strategic aims of the United States.⁹⁹

This geographic arrangement presents a regional focus when addressing the problems that arise from political interaction. For the most part, these geographic boundaries follow national borders. This characteristic provides focus to the commands by scoping responsibilities to a

⁹⁵ Gillette, 6.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁷ Donald Rumsfeld, "DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers," (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service Inc., 7 January 2003). [online] available from http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2003/t01072003_t0107sd.html; accessed 8 March 2003.

⁹⁸ *JP 0-2*, I-6

⁹⁹ Ibid., vii.

manageable set of countries that interact in the political realm due to geographic proximity. This also serves to limit the commands and allows them to focus resources on a finite set of problems.

The design of the plan allows a combatant commander, as the first level Joint Force Commander, to become an expert in his specified region. In these regions they coordinate with the assigned ambassadors for activities within specific countries.¹⁰⁰ If a problem arises within a combatant commander's region, he has access and input through a direct command relationship to the national leadership for strategic guidance. Once the strategic aspect is clarified, the commander then has the freedom to operationally employ assigned forces and capabilities to best achieve those national aims.¹⁰¹

This arrangement, although logical, does not address every situation. As is ever the case with political discourse, there are times when circumstances supersede the rules. The history of the UCP is replete with examples of friction when problems stemming from nation-state relationships have risen across these artificial boundaries. Two current examples of this friction are the India – Pakistan problem involving USPACOM (India) and USCENTCOM (Pakistan).¹⁰² A similar example is USEUCOM (Israel) and USCENTCOM's responsibility for many of Israel's Middle Eastern neighbors. To paraphrase an old combat axiom; contact will most likely occur at the adjoining of two map sheets.

Another historical example of the UCP falling short in defining clear, efficient responsibilities occurred during the Cold War. The control and unified employment of the key weapons of the Cold War presented a problem for the military.¹⁰³ The weapons, long-range bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles, formed an essential core of United States

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., I-5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Story, 10.

deterritorial capability in the emerging nuclear world. After much maneuvering on the part of the service chiefs, the resultant solution was the creation of a specified functional command, the Strategic Air Command (SAC). SAC's responsibility included the operational employment of the United States' strategic air assets and nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁴ This example offers particular value in comparison to the problem addressed in this monograph. There is similarity between SAC's apportionment of and responsibility for strategic assets, which ranged across multiple AORs, and the problem presented to the twenty-first century military in addressing the global threat of transnational terrorism. In one aspect, the threat of transnational terrorism and the threat of communist proliferation are similar in their global nature. There is an obvious difference between the two threats in ways and means. However, the creation of a functional command in SAC to operationalize a global effort may suggest a method to address the new global threat of terrorism.

The study of the United States' global military structure in this section has highlighted the reasons for its development. It exists to ensure unity of effort of the joint force in actions to support or achieve national interests. This chapter identifies the UCP as the foremost document for delineating the responsibilities and missions of the combatant commands, and establishes a regional focus as the central method for the organization of worldwide warfighting capability. A conclusion drawn from this chapter is that the UCP is effective in addressing regional state-based issues. The UCP is an adaptive plan that has allowed the military to create appropriate conditions to achieve national strategy for over fifty years. As the operational environment changed, the process for assigning responsibilities and missions to the operational force has likewise been flexible enough to change. Finally, this chapter highlighted some areas where friction exists at

¹⁰³ Cole, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Cole, 21.

the operational level because of a regional focus. The next section will use the current UCP and the previous study of global terrorism as a departure point to analyze the current framework and its ability to achieve unified action in the context of the war on terrorism.

CHAPTER 4:

THE FRAMEWORK VS. THE THREAT

How then does the United States Military currently perform against the global problem presented by transnational terrorism? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the provisions of the Unified Command Plan in setting the conditions for the application of operational military force against a non-state threat with no geographic ties? As identified earlier the network of transnational terror cannot hope to attain, nor does it have as its aim, the destruction of the United States. However, the course of action demonstrated by terror attacks designed to bring about maximum destruction and loss of life presents a clear danger to the interests of the United States both within its borders and abroad.

A Weakness in Unity of Effort

In February of 2003 the National Security Council published the updated National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. This document clearly defines the strategic aim of the United States. Beyond the aim, the strategy describes four broad logical lines of operation in order to defeat international terror networks. The NSCT characterizes these lines of operations as actions to defeat, deny, diminish, and defend.¹⁰⁵

The first three actions are offensive in nature. Defeating global terrorism will involve actions that attack terrorist “sanctuaries; leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances.”¹⁰⁶ The use of military force is implicit in this line of operation and

¹⁰⁵ NSCT, 11-12.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 12.

supports the analysis that sanctuary is a valid vulnerability. Actions to, “deny further sponsorship” constitute the second line. The denial efforts are largely a diplomatic endeavor. However, the threat of military force is inherent in this line.¹⁰⁷ Actions to diminish terrorism are focused on the “underlying conditions” that create and sustain terrorist organizations and sympathy. As described in the NSCT, these actions will have significant diplomatic, informational, and economic aspects.¹⁰⁸ Finally the actions to defend the U.S. encompass broad intelligence, military, and interagency efforts to protect interests in the homeland and abroad.¹⁰⁹ The actions dictated by the NSCT are designed to have a cumulative effect, and “compress the scope and capability of terrorist organizations. The end result being current transnational terrorist organizations isolated regionally, and only capable of small-scale uncoordinated action.”¹¹⁰ Figure 5 is a graphic entitled, “Operationalizing the Strategy” drawn from the NSCT that represents the cumulative effect of actions to reduce the scope and capabilities of transnational terrorism over time.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

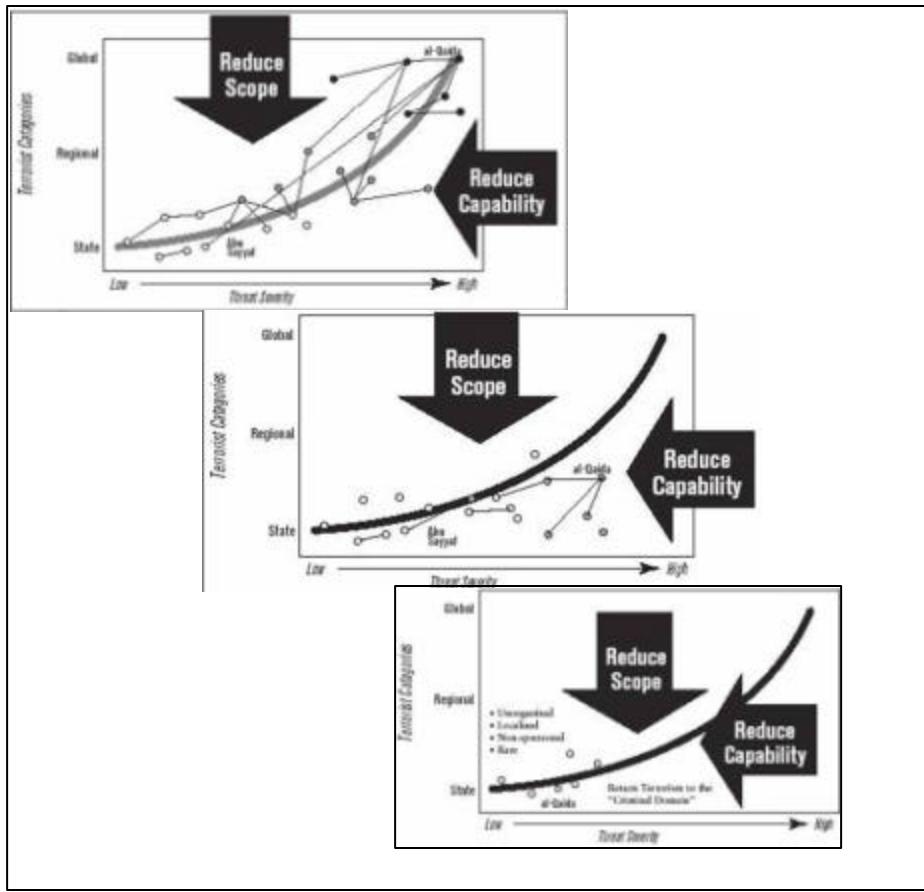


Figure 5

In Figure 5, the threat severity (capability) is the X-axis and terrorist organizations are categorized along the Y-axis by reach (scope) either global, regional, or state.¹¹¹ The three figures represent the progression of effect that operations to reduce the capability and scope of terrorist organizations is designed to achieve. The top chart depicts the current situation and the bottom chart is the desired endstate. The model depicts the al Qaida organization at the top right of the chart. This position represents an organization with global reach, capable of high threat activity.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Additionally, the lines between groups depict the connections between various terrorist organizations. Over time, the effort to combat terrorism breaks these lines; diminishes terrorist reach; and renders the remaining organizations incapable of high threat operations. This level of detail provides direction that effectively enables and informs application at the operational level. The efforts along the Y-axis are designed to reduce the global scope of terrorism from worldwide capability down to known regions or specific areas. The actions along the X-axis are meant to undermine the ability of terror networks to inflict damage on a mass casualty scale.¹¹² By these efforts, the Nation can arrive at the desired endstate.

At the operational level, how is the military set up to execute operations to achieve these strategic objectives? The analysis thus far used the first two elements of operational design to examine the war on terror. The analysis has clarified the strategic aims and identified the critical factors and vulnerabilities of each adversary. Applying the essential elements of operational design and current joint doctrine as a metric, the effectiveness of the U.S. Military's framework of responsibility and organization can be assessed.

The military, in conjunction with other United States departments and agencies, has embarked on a campaign that will limit the sanctuary for terrorism worldwide.¹¹³ However, in examining the effort of the military in this fight using the third key element of operational design, a vulnerability of unity of effort is exposed. The third key element of operational design is again, "developing an operational concept or scheme that will achieve the strategic objective(s)."¹¹⁴ At the operational level, the question remains of which command develops this operational concept or scheme that will achieve the military objectives in support of the strategic aim of defeating

¹¹² NSS, 5.

¹¹³ NSCT, 11

¹¹⁴ JP 5-00.1, II-1.

transnational terrorism. Again, the U.S. adversary in this conflict is not a traditional state, neither is it a local or regional entity. Rather, it is a globally distributed system operating outside of traditional state or regional constraints. In short, it is a phenomenon that the Nation's current military structure is not designed or optimized to defeat.

The remainder of this chapter will illustrate this vulnerability. The command and control arrangement of the operational military is structured regionally and functionally to, "establish conditions that increase the effectiveness of other instruments of national power in preventing conflict."¹¹⁵ If prevention is not possible, the arrangement of responsibilities, missions, and force structure sets the conditions for decisively fighting and winning any ensuing conflict. The strategy and priority for the conduct of this war is clear. The combatant commands, representing the initial operational level, have the mission to defeat terrorism. However, the version of terrorism described in this analysis is not confined to the geographic boundaries of any of the designated regional combatant commands. What is known is that this type of terrorism lives, works, and communicates across over fifty countries worldwide and that its effective area spans the AORs of all five regional combatant commands.¹¹⁶ The President, the Secretary of Defense, and the CJCS, have defined the strategy for defeating terrorism in the NSS, the NSCT, and the draft NMS. But, at the operational level, which leader sets the operational priority for the global war on terror?

When viewed in terms of setting effort and resource priorities, collecting and disseminating intelligence, and directing action to accomplish the national objective, this highlighted weakness is readily apparent. For example, the EUCOM staff focuses its efforts on the specified EUCOM AOR. The command views the war on terrorism through a decidedly European lens. Given the

¹¹⁵ Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy: Pre-Decisional Draft* (13 September 2002). Copy received via email.

¹¹⁶ Alexander and Swetnam, 31.

mission to defeat transnational terrorism, the command will identify the threat or threats within the AOR; formulate a concept to defeat the threat; then prioritize assets and actions to achieve this aim within the bounds of its designated AOR. Although the U.S. Military is overall a robust organization, competition exists for resources. Some of the resources most appropriate for countering terrorism, especially intelligence and reconnaissance assets, may not be available in the quantity to meet the needs of every unified command's unique priorities.¹¹⁷

As discussed earlier, friction in the current arrangement can occur on the boundary or seam between two or more combatant commands. The tangible seams resulting at the boundaries between combatant commands are weaknesses the terror networks can directly exploit. As effort within one AOR disrupts terrorist activity, terrorist organizations may find sanctuary in other commands' regions that may not be as focused or prepared to address the influx of a new terrorist threat. The existing situation also creates a conceptual seam between the five regional combatant commands as competition for resources and priority, and unsynchronized operations hinder global unified action. The conceptual seam resulting from these conflicting regional concepts will cause a weakness in the overall effort from within.

This situation expands the problem of unified action beyond the usual goal of jointness applied by a unified command against a regional problem. The Nation now faces a requirement for global jointness that has yet to be achieved. This being the case, there is no unified operational concept to defeat the globally distributed enemy. Although there is a national strategy for countering terrorism, no organization exists to operationalize that strategy into coherent action on a global scale. Instead, the military will at best end up with five distinct concepts from the regional combatant commands. These concepts may be the optimum plan for the respective AORs, but as a whole will not engage the enemy with a globally integrated and

¹¹⁷ Story, 20. While this article does not address efforts to combat terrorism, it does examine the frictions involved in the UCP structure. One of these identified frictions is the competition for resources.

synchronized operational concept. The requirement of the national strategy to focus decisive military power globally is beyond the scope and expertise of any of the existing combatant commands.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This monograph draws the following conclusions from the analysis of the war on terror.

Transnational terror remains a clear and present danger to United States' citizens and interests at home and abroad. The operations of international terror organizations have been disrupted recently, but not destroyed. Using al Qaida as an example of global terror, it is evident that its worldwide distribution has made it resilient and adaptable. A June 2002 article in the *Christian Science Monitor* described transnational terrorism and its residual capabilities:

Just as a frail mother spider sends hundreds of young creeping to the far reaches of her web, Al Qaeda's core mission – to wage jihad on Americans and their allies – lives on through its cells and links to radical Islamic groups already dispersed around the globe.¹¹⁸

These cells and links still exist. The combination of a radical militant ideology, focused by a capable leadership able to plan and coordinate violent action on a massive scale, poses a continuing threat to the United States.

The national leadership has unofficially, yet clearly declared the war on terrorism. The United States Military plays an essential role in this effort. The military will execute this role in coordination and cooperation with other elements of national power.¹¹⁹ Sometimes the military may be the focus of effort. At other times, the military will play a decidedly supporting role. Whatever the priority, it is certain that the application of military force to achieve the defeat of

¹¹⁸ Anne Scott Tyson, "Al Qaeda Broken, but Dangerous," *Christian Science Monitor*, (Washington; D.C.: 24 June, 2002). [online]: available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0624/p01s02-usgn.html>; internet; accessed 22 February 2003.

¹¹⁹ Secretary Colin Powell, preface to Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 2002), iii. [online] available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2001/pdf/>; internet; accessed 11 March 2003.

transnational terrorism is highly likely in many future scenarios. For this reason, it is imperative that the military approach this fight with coherent, effective, and decisive action.

Joint doctrine uses the elements of operational design as a method to meet the requirements of operational art, and achieve strategic purposes with coherent action. The NSS and the NSCT provide the strategic aims and military objectives, the first key element of operational design. The analysis in this monograph has examined the combatants of the war on terror using LTC Echevarria's definition of the concept of center of gravity and Dr. Strange's operational model. In accordance with the second element of operational design, the analysis determined vulnerabilities of both transnational terrorism and the United States. The third element of operational design, the operational concept or scheme to achieve the strategic objective, is the final metric for evaluating the United States' operational effort to defeat global terrorism. Without global unity of effort, the possibility that an effective operational concept will ever be developed to achieve the strategic aim is highly unlikely.

The operational military framework dictated by the system of unified commands is the first level that sets the conditions for successful application of the military aspect of national power. This first level operational arrangement focuses this effort to effectively deal with regional problems. Transnational terrorism, by definition, transcends regionalism, thereby creating a unity of effort vulnerability in the United States' ability to plan, coordinate and direct effort to combat transnational terrorism on a global scale. There can be no unified effort on a global scale, if there is no entity given a global responsibility.

The regional nature of the existing framework creates physical seams for the terrorist adversary to exploit. It also creates conceptual seams as each regional command formulates its own scheme to address terrorism within the bounds of its designated AOR irrespective of other commands. These conceptual seams become another weakness in the overall effort as the

allocation of priority and resources have the potential to remain at odds across disparate commands.

Given the shortcoming listed in the previous section, what action should be taken to address the identified vulnerability and maximize unity of effort in achieving the operational objectives of the war on terror? In recent months, the Department of Defense has taken initial steps to mitigate this inadequacy. Open source changes to the classified UCP have addressed the threat to the Nation posed by international terror. These changes include the creation of a new regional command, Northern Command; the merger of SPACECOM and STRATCOM; and the adjustment of responsibilities of Joint Forces Command and Special Operations Command.

The change in responsibilities of USSOCOM has the greatest effect on the military efforts in the war on terrorism. These changes were initiated by a recognition of the changed operational environment and are meant to enhance the capability of the force to operate in this newly recognized milieu. The Department of Defense saw the necessity to adjust the current arrangement and gave the command, “the kinds of responsibilities and authorities that match the needs of the environment we are in and the one we anticipate.”¹²⁰ These changes announced in late 2002 are limited in nature. While in specific cases, the changes address unity of effort frictions, the regional focus of the UCP remains in place.

These adjustments in responsibilities are necessary, but are they sufficient to overcome the problems created by this regional structure of responsibility? Might the adjustments be made even more comprehensive to strengthen the command and control structure of the operational

¹²⁰DoD News Transcript, “Background Briefing,” [online] available from http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2003/t01072003_t107bkgd.html; internet; accessed 8 March 2003. Although not specific for reasons of operational security, the briefing cited above outlines the change in USSOCOM’s relationship with other regional commands as “supported” in some cases. The briefing also highlighted a change in the relationship of USSOCOM with the regional command Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). In some cases not specified, the TSOC will report directly to USSOCOM and the regional commands will assume a supporting role within the AOR.

military to combat the global threat of transnational terrorism? The military should create or designate a single command and control entity to combat terrorism. This entity can be created by expanding the responsibility of the Joint Staff to include operational command and control responsibility for combating terrorism on a global scale. An operational Joint Staff would ensure global unity of effort by planning, coordinating, and directing actions to combat terrorism.

Another solution would be the designation or creation of a functional command with global responsibility. The function would differ from the operational Joint Staff solution in that when required, the command could also execute military action to defeat terrorism. This option allows for either centralized or decentralized tactical execution as the situation warrants. This new arrangement differs in respect to the other functional commands in its warfighting focus. With this focus, the command effectively would become a combatant command unlimited by geographic boundaries. For the war on terrorism, its area of responsibility would be the world. Additionally, the current definition of unified action would still apply to the global AOR. In light of Secretary Rumsfeld's January 2003 remarks, the Department of Defense may be on the way to designating USSOCOM as the responsible command for combating terrorism on a global scale.¹²¹

A single command and control entity can capitalize on the current structure of forces and responsibility. By designating a single staff or supported command responsible for the military effort in the war on terror, other unified commands are by default in support. The local expertise of a supporting regional command may then be focused for a global effort. Regional unified command efforts to defeat terrorism can be integrated and synchronized by the operational staff or supported command to best formulate a concept that achieves the strategic aim. To accomplish this integration and synchronization, a timely, joint procedure to examine both the priorities of the Nation and the dynamic nature of the threat should be established to maximize the capabilities of

¹²¹ Donald Rumsfeld, "DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers," (7 January 2003).

the regional unified commands as local experts. Whether the solution is an operational staff or a supported command, a single responsible agent sets priorities for the worldwide effort to combat terrorism, and the supporting commands would have a mechanism for timely input that leverages the in-place structure of the current operational framework.

Additionally, this change in the command and control structure would provide the Nation with a single point of responsibility for other agencies and departments to liaise with to coordinate efforts on a broader scope, integrating effort across the elements of national power. In this recommendation, the single operational staff or designated supported command would function as the agent for the application of the military aspect of national power. In either case, these solutions would effectively create an arrangement whereby all counterterrorist operations are coordinated through one entity to mitigate the unity of effort vulnerability and achieve unified action on a global scale. These recommendations strengthen The United States' operational CoG.

In their 2002 RAND monograph Paul Davis and Brian Jenkins addressed the requirement at the strategic level for improving the capacity for both effective distributed decision making and improving the capacity for rapid centralized decision-making and action.¹²² These points reflect the vulnerability of unity of effort on the macro-strategic level. Likewise, increasing this capacity at the operational level has the potential to increase flexibility for the operational application of decisive military power. The designation of a single responsible staff or command would allow for centralized responsibility to ensure unified effort and resultant unified action at the operational level.

In this recommendation, the lead for military efforts to combat terrorism lies firmly with one designated entity to streamline the command and control structure. This new arrangement is necessary in order to ensure unity of effort against an enemy without borders. Despite the

¹²² Davis and Jenkins, 31-34.

successes of Operation Enduring Freedom and other actions that have restricted terrorist freedom of action and further disrupted their activities, terror networks have the means to adapt to the increasing pressure applied since the September 11th attacks. The United States is on the right track and is winning the near-term conflict to disrupt and destroy terrorist activity. However, the war to defeat terrorism promises to be a protracted endeavor. Military effort to achieve the stated end will require constant and unrelenting global unified action gained through unity of effort.

In pursuit of an aim that is so vitally important to the national interest though, there remains room for improvement. Improvement in the operational command and control of the military is necessary to achieve the defeat of transnational terrorism. The surest method to unifying the effort to defeat terrorism is to assign the responsibility to one entity. This monograph proposes the designation of an operational staff or functional command with global responsibility to combat terrorism as the way to maximize unity of effort and achieve global unified action. For in the end, unified action is more effective, and effectiveness is a requirement in a cause so important to National Security.

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